of a gasket liner in the flanged connection was responsible for the fire. Further investigations are in progress to establish the cause of such failure

(c) Except for some small size piping and a few field instruments, none of the equipment and machinery at site appear to have been damaged due to exposure to fire. In the control room, but for instrument cables and also peripherals, the panel mounted instruments do not seem to have sustained any major damage.

The rectification and repair work is expected to take a few months.

Findings of the investigation regarding escape of Charles Sobhraj and others from Tihar Jail

*118. SHRI RAOOF VALIULLAH: SHRI KALPNATH RAI:

Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the investigating authority set up a probe into the circumstances which led to the escape of Charles Sobhraj and others from the Tihar Jail in Delhi recently presented its report;

(b) if so, what are its findings;

(c) what steps are being taken at Tihar jail to tighten vigilance and security in the light of the above findings; and

(d) what action is being taken against the jail staff whose lapses had led to the escape of the prisoners?

THE MINISTER OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI BUTA SINGH): (a) to (d) 1. An inquiry into finding and the circumstances leading to the escape of Charles Sobhraj was ordered by the Lt. Governor, Delhi by a senior officer of Delhi Administration. The Inquiry officer has submitted his report to Delhi Administration.

2. The inquiry officer attributed the escape directly to the negligence and lapses on the part of a number of jail officials.

3. The following steps have been taken to tighten the vigilance and security at Tihar Jail:—

(1) The office of the IG & DIG (Prisons) has been shifted to the Tihar Jail premises.

(2) More companies of CRPF have been added and strict vigilance is kept on visitors.

(3) No vehicle is allowed to be parked near the jail campus.

(4) A communication net-work has been set up.

(5) Frisking of prisoners before and after the meeting.

(6) Arrangements for adequate lighting have been made.

(7) A Screening Committee has been set up for screening jail staff.

4. 11 Officers have been placed under suspension, 8 are being prosecuted whereas departmental action against 3 is being taken.

Visit of Pollution Experts to West Germany

*119. SHRI K. VASUDEVA PANICKER: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether a three-member team of pollution experts visited West Germany recently to study pollution control measures; and

(b) if so, what are the details of the report, if any, submitted to Government by the team?

THE PRIME MINISTER (SHRI RAJIV GANDHI): (a) and (b) A 5-member team undertook a study tour of West Germany from 22nd September to 12th October, 1985. The major aspects covered in the reports submitted by the members are:

—Environmental Management of Mining Operations;

—Air and Water Pollution Control;

—Recycling and Disposal of wastes; and

—Forest Conservation and the Problem of Acid Rain.

Stateless Persons in Sikkim

*120. SHRI KALPNATH RAI:
SHRIMATI SUDHA VIJAY JOSHI:

Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that there are thousands of Stateless persons in Sikkim;

(b) if so, what is their exact number;

(c) what are the circumstances under which they became Stateless persons; and

(d) whether granting of citizenship to them is under consideration and whether any guidelines have been laid in the matter?

THE MINISTER OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI BUTA SINGH): (a) to (d) An order was issued on 16th May, 1975 under Section 7 of the Citizenship Act, 1955 providing that every person who immediately before 26th April, 1975 (date when Sikkim became 22nd State of the Indian Union) was a Sikkim Subject under the Sikkim Subjects Regulation, 1961, would be deemed to have become a Citizen of India. Those who were not registered under the aforesaid Regulation of 1961 or were not eligible to be so registered are among the persons who may be regarded as stateless, unless they have a claim to any other nationality. The number of stateless persons is estimated to be about 30,000.

The claims of such persons for citizenship are to be considered with due caution keeping in view the provisions of the Citizenship Act, 1955.

Losses by Forest Fire

460. DR. MOHD. HASHIM KIDWAI: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) what is the estimated loss per year caused by forests fire in different forests of the country during the last three years; and

(b) what measures Govrnment have taken to prevent and control fires in areas where forests fires are frequent?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI Z. R. ANSARI): (a) The estimated average loss per year caused by forest fires in different forests of the country during the last three years, is reported by the various States/UTs. to be approximately Rs. 24 lakhs.

(b) There are State sector schemes and activities for protection of forests which include measures for prevention and control of fire. A Central Sector Pilot Project has been launched since 1984 with U.N.D.P. assistance in the States of Maharashtra and Uttar Pradesh to devise, test and demonstrate principles and techniques of prevention, detection and suppression of forest fires. The experience gained from the project will be made available to other States for guidance and use.

Enquiry into working of Electronics Trade and Technology Development Corporation

461. DR. BAPU KALDATE: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether an enquiry has recently been initiated into the working of the Electronics Trade and Technology Development Corporation;

(b) if so, what are the reasons therefor;

(c) whether the enquiry has been completed; and

(d) if so, what are the findings thereof?